

Role of Civil Society Organisations in HPV Vaccine Demand Generation in Uganda

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Introduction

PATH, with funding from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, piloted a demand generation model of partnering with local Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to increase demand and uptake for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine in two sub regions of Ankole and Busoga in Uganda between June 2024 and February 2024. PATH subcontracted the two CSOs; InPact and Busoga Health Forum (BHF) to support demand generation for HPV vaccination and routine immunization services in the two regions that consistently registered sub optimal performance in HPV vaccine coverage. The CSOs were given non identical scopes of work with room to innovate and tailor demand interventions that suited local contexts in which they worked.

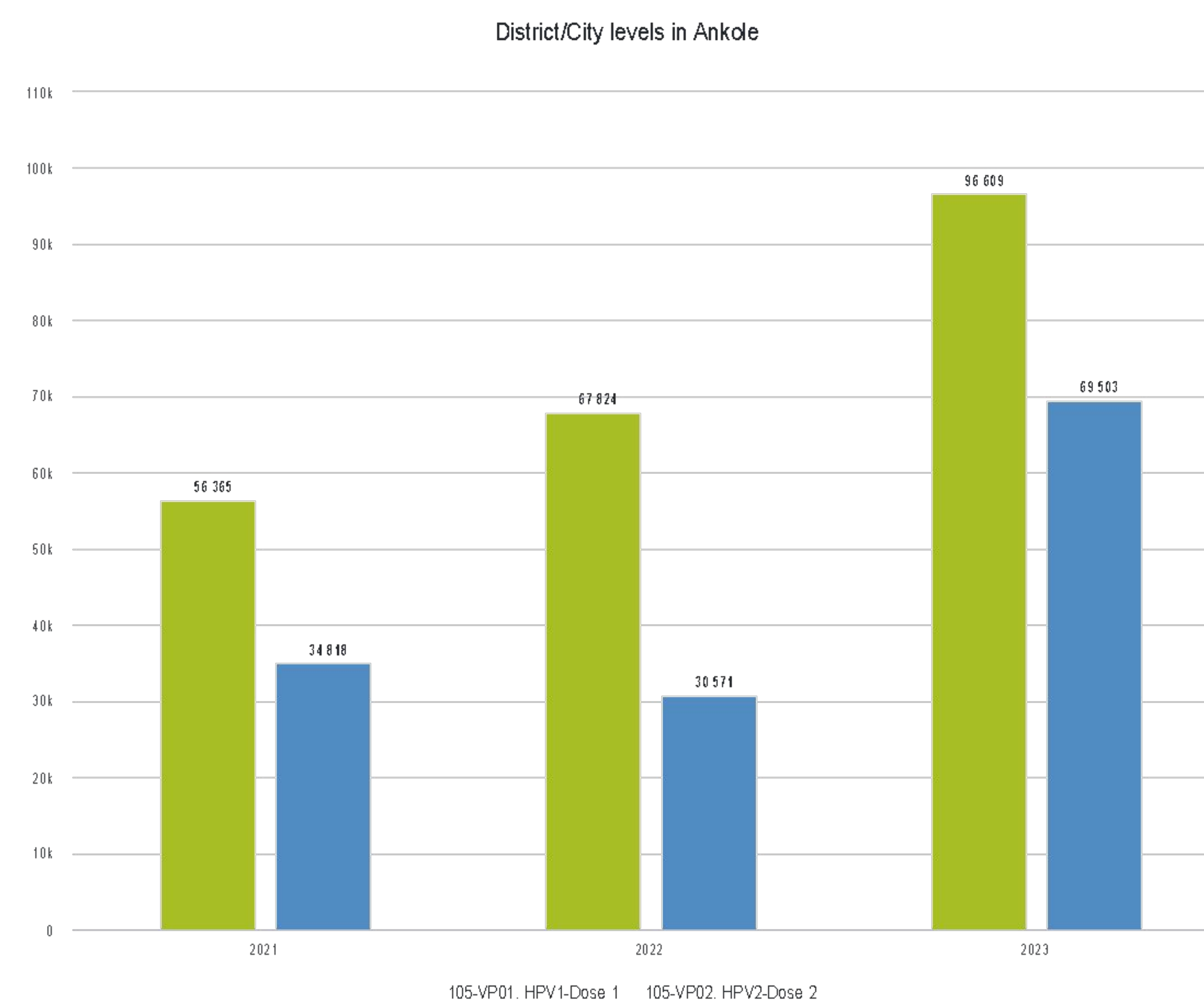
Methods

A rigorous process was undertaken to select the two partners. PATH published a request for applications (RFP), where the two CSOs and many others expressed interest to implement tailored demand-generation interventions to improve HPV vaccination and routine immunization performance. A competitive evaluation of the applications and selection of the two CSOs was later conducted. BHF and InPact were selected to lead HPV vaccination and routine immunization demand generation efforts in the two afore mentioned sub regions. PATH ensured the two CSOs were successfully onboarded and linked to the Ministry of Health Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI), including introducing them to the different EPI technical working groups and sub committees that cut across all EPI pillars. PATH provided technical assistance in terms of program conceptualization, work planning and development of advocacy strategies, and support supervision.

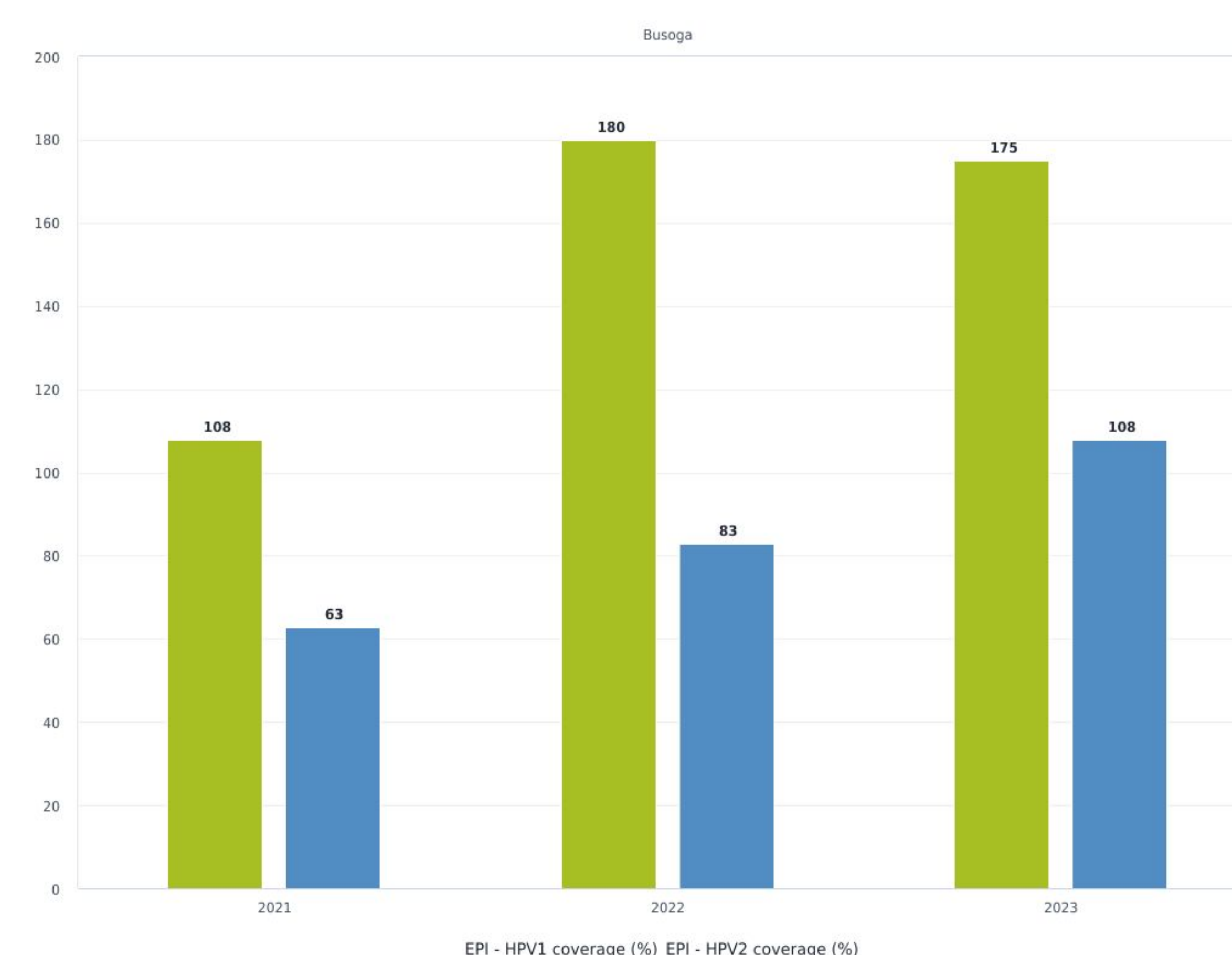
Results

In less than 8 months, the two CSOs were able to conduct multiple stakeholder engagements after carrying out thorough stakeholder mapping. The engagements reached different categories that included religious and cultural leaders, health practitioners, policymakers at national and district level, community-based organizations, among others. CSO efforts yielded fruit as was seen through a gentle spike in HPV vaccination coverage that later peaked, more than usual, during the October 2023 integrated child health days (ICHD).

Ankole region HPV outlook for 2021, 2022 and 2023 Green-HPV 1 and Blue HPV 2



Busoga region HPV outlook for 2021, 2022 and 2023 Green-HPV 1 and Blue HPV 2



Success factors included the early understanding of the gap by stakeholders in HPV demand generation and routine immunization, working with existing structures at district and community level, buy in from the key decision makers, new partnerships that included non health stakeholders with high influence and ability to shape public opinions such as radio DJs, radio presenters, reporters and teachers. Strong multi sectoral collaboration especially with the education sector was critical to attaining HPV vaccination targets.

Conclusions

Leveraging the power of local CSOs to mobilize communities significantly improves HPV vaccination and routine immunisation outcomes. Collaborating closely with teachers and school administrators is a strategic approach to reaching eligible girls in school for HPV vaccination.

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